under the Chairmanship of Special Secretary in the Ministry of Defence was constituted.The recommendations of the Committee were examined in the Ministry and some of them have been accepted in principle for implementation.

2. As far as the structure of training is concerned, the process is itself dynamic. The training needs are based on changing threat perception, operational objectives and analysis of the weaknesses and strengths of the forces. Army also issues a Biennial Training Directive, the core policy document which lays down the policy for the entire Army. It contains the Army vision, training objectives and approach to be adopted in meeting the training needs of the Army. Training needs are continually reviewed, updated and monitored at all levels.

Death of a soldier at Siachen

†1574. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a state of confusion is prevailing over death of a soldier named Balvinder who was deployed at Siachen Glacier in the night of 31st July;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reasons for death of the said soldier?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES):(a) to (c) The circumstances under which the death of No.14438134 Gnr (TA) Balwinder Singh occurred, are under investigation.

Establishment of a Laboratory for testing torpedoes

1575. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) when the laboratory for the testing of torpedoes in sheltered water was established by Defence Research and Development Organisation;

(b) the details with amount invested therein;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether the desired results could not be achieved as it depended on Navy and foreign ranges for its testing requirement; and

(d) if so, the details and loss sustained as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES):(a) The facility for testing the torpedoes in sheltered water was established in June, 1999.

(b) The facilities are utilized for testing sub-systems of mines and torpedoes. The expenditure incurred on the project was Rs.7.647 crore.

(c) Association of Navy was necessary for platform specific trials only when it was not possible to simulate actual conditions and interfaces for large variety of different platforms. Testing at foreign ranges in certain cases was unavoidable due to non-availability of instrumentation and tracking facilities.

(d) Does not arise.

Merging of cantonment boards with municipal corporations

1576. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Army Cantonments which are still functioning in congested urban agglomerations and major municipal corporations/board areas in the country;

(b) whether Government feel that the prevailing system of separate cantonments has outlived its utility and the Governance thereof undemocratic; and

(c) whether Government would consider abolishing/converting cantonment boards and merge the same with the democratically elected local municipal corporations/bodies?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES):(a) There are 62 Army cantonments in the country, constituted under the provisions of the Cantonments Act, 1924, for specific municipal duties with a view to ensuring better health and sanitation to the troops in the Cantonments. The Cantonments are less congested than the neighbouring corporations.